

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Morbidity and Mortality



WEEKLY
REPORT

For
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE / PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HEALTH SERVICES AND MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
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INTERNATIONAL NOTES CHANGE IN CHOLERA VACCINATION REQUIREMENT

The Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, Dr. Jesse Steinfeld, announced today that the United States will no longer require cholera vaccinations for travelers coming to the United States from cholera-infected areas. In Washington, at the PAHO/WHO International Conference on the Application of Vaccines Against Viral, Rickettsial, and Bacterial Diseases of Man, Dr. Steinfeld said that the United States thus becomes the first country in the world to adopt this official position. His remarks were made as part of a presentation entitled "Cost-Benefit Analysis in the Developed Countries."

Dr. Steinfeld said, "...the preceding remarks have been directed to the benefits of domestic immunization programs. We must also be mindful of the costs and benefits of immunizations that may be of use in the prevention of international spread of disease. There are no doubts of the efficacy of smallpox and yellow fever vaccines in this respect.

"On the other hand, there is clear evidence that cholera vaccine is of little use in preventing the spread of cholera across borders. We have, today, excellent treatment for cholera. The only effective method of preventing the spread of the disease is improvement of environmental sanitation. Therefore, in weighing costs and benefits, the United States has decided there is no reason for our government to require cholera vaccination as a condition of entry to the U.S. for travelers coming from an infected area. We believe strongly that this move benefits the better understanding of the disease at no cost to health."

Dr. Steinfeld further said that there is every reason to believe there will be sporadic importations into this country, but there is no reason to believe that there will be any spread of the disease after importation. In spite of some inadequacies in our environmental sanitation programs, these programs are still very capable of preventing the spread of cholera.

Cholera has been spreading from the Middle East for the past 2 years. This year it reached sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. Cholera is treated by replacing lost fluids and electrolytes and administering appropriate antibiotics. The present vaccine is at best 50 percent effective and does little to prevent the subclinical or carrier state. The only reason for immunization is to reduce morbidity and mortality in countries where health facilities for treatment are inadequate.

It should be emphasized, however, that cholera vaccination requirements for countries other than the U.S. have not changed, and travelers should be immunized against cholera according to each individual country's regulations.

(Reported by the Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia.)

The following countries and areas have officially reported cholera as of December 17, 1970:

Afars and the Issas	Indonesia	Philippines
Burma	Ivory Coast	Sierra Leone
Ethiopia	Liberia	Syria
Gaza Strip	Mali	Togo
Ghana	Nepal	Trucial Oman
India	East Pakistan	Republic of Vietnam

(Reported by the Foreign Quarantine Program, CDC)

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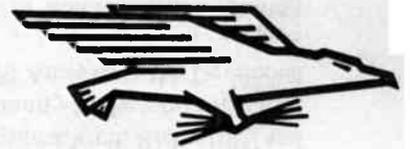
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SUBJECT: Change In Cholera Vaccination Requirement

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